

concerning as it relates to the public safety network. In the immediate aftermath of September 11th the importance of a strong and consistent public safety network was clear—first responders and emergency workers must be able to communicate in emergency and disaster situations. There is an insufficient amount of funds to research, build, and develop the public safety communications network as well as no requirement that the network providing for effective governance and national operability.

Finally, while I wholeheartedly believe that we must fix the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate Physician payment formula (or “doc fix”), we cannot do it on the backs of the hospitals. This bill would cut Medicare hospital outpatient reimbursement rates to equalize them with rates for services provided in physician offices. The proposal is misguided because it ignores the significant differences in cost structures between hospitals and physician offices, including the added costs hospitals incur for caring for the uninsured. All of these cuts are on top of \$155 billion in hospitals cuts from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and more than \$40 billion in cuts just created by sequestration. Hospitals simply cannot sustain these cuts and patient care will suffer if they are forced to do so.

RECOGNIZING JEFFERY POTTER
AS THE 2012 PRESIDENT OF THE
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, on December 9, 2011 Jeffery Potter was duly elected to serve as President of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Jeff is the Vice-President of POTTER, a design firm in Dallas, Texas established in 1983. The firm has a broad portfolio but specifically seeks to advance school-house design in the region.

Jeff has been recognized by his peers through numerous regional AIA and trade awards for his design efforts and has juried design awards programs throughout the United States. Over the past 30 years Jeff has worked to elevate professional communications between his peers and to educate the public on the importance of design. Additionally, Jeff has worked with his colleagues to help combine traditional architectural journalism with social media and knowledge sharing to promote architecture in the 21st century.

As AIA President, Jeff has stated that he will focus on what he calls the “two spheres of influence”: nurturing a grassroots organization of architects and building on the strengths of the organization to promote a professional institute of design leaders.

I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Potter's accomplishments and ask that we acknowledge the important role that architects serve in our economy.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern about the United States Navy's future plan to home port a nuclear powered aircraft carrier aboard Naval Station Mayport. I, along with other members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation, have continued to question the duplication of resources to move the home port of a nuclear aircraft carrier, when current resources in Norfolk, Virginia, meet these needs.

This nation is in very challenging and uncharted waters with respect to the Department of Defense budget. Every effort must be made to ensure efficient and thoughtful planning, procurement, and budgeting is conducted to support our national security strategy for the 21st century. While the budget may be getting smaller, the request for power projection and forward presence around the globe to protect our interests and ensure a peaceful future is only growing. Sequestration and the very real possibility of cutting \$1 billion out of the Department of Defense budget over the next ten years puts our carrier force in jeopardy.

With these major defense cuts coming we are forced to address the proposal by the United States Navy to move a nuclear powered aircraft carrier to Naval Station Mayport. While strategic dispersal of forces is important, what is more important is that we maintain a capable level of forces to disperse.

An iconic symbol of American freedom domestically and abroad and a potential item for the sequestration chopping block, the aircraft carrier could face detrimental cuts to her fleet and capability because of a flawed defense strategy driven by looming budget cuts. The Navy has 11 nuclear-powered aircraft carriers in her fleet. While six remain deployed across the world, supporting operations, others are in rotation, utilized for training or remain in the shipyard for necessary maintenance.

On September 23, 2011, I wrote the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Jonathan Greenert arguing that at a time when the nation's historic fiscal challenges will require drastic cuts in federal spending, it is fiscally irresponsible and strategically unnecessary to build expensive and redundant nuclear-support infrastructure for CVN homeporting when there are more cost-effective alternatives to sustain Mayport's future as an operational base.

Admiral Greenert's response to the letter indicated concerns raised about the movement of an aircraft carrier to Mayport would be included in the Navy's strategic calculus. He stated that “the size of fiscal adjustments compels us to take a comprehensive strategic review, examining every program element, including the funding required to homeport a CVN in Mayport”.

The conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 1540, addressed the issue of military construction funding for a road improvement project at Mayport. It states, “The conferees determined that the Massey Avenue Corridor Improvements Project had merit to support requirements at the Naval Station Mayport, Florida, whether or not a nu-

clear powered aircraft carrier was home ported there.”

The proposed home port shift of an aircraft carrier, especially in this challenging budget environment, is unaffordable and unnecessary and I encourage this Congress and the United States Navy to carefully consider a better utilization of taxpayer resources to fund our men and women in uniform.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 26, 1995, when the last attempt at a balanced budget amendment passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 300–132, the national debt was \$4,801,405,175,294.28.

Today, it is \$15,051,286,197,149.79. We've added \$10,249,881,021,855.51 to our debt in 16 years. This is \$10 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

RETIREMENT OF MR. T.J. PREJEAN, JR.

HON. CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR.

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate T.J. Prejean, Jr. on his retirement from the Vermilion Parish Policy Jury.

For 31 years, T.J. proudly served District 13 as police juror, twice being the Vice President of the jury. Having attended 3,000 meetings during his career, T.J.'s commitment to ensuring the well-being of Vermilion Parish is clear.

Formerly an oil rig worker and farmer, T.J. began his service in office in 1980 and served eight consecutive terms. Opposition often stood in his way, but T.J.'s door-to-door campaign style reinforced his personal connection to the community.

During his time as police juror, T.J. made every effort to be accessible to the residents of District 13. He provided assistance during the several major hurricanes our region experienced in the past decade. In doing so, he demonstrated himself a concerned and dependable leader. His final police jury meeting will be Monday, December 19, 2011.

I offer my sincerest appreciation to T.J. Hebert for his dedication to the people of Vermilion Parish and congratulate him on his retirement. I am honored to be his representative in Congress.

BEN COLE

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, every town has a few heroes, and lucky is the man whose

life crosses the path of one. I have had that good fortune in getting to know Ben Cole of Savannah.

Ben runs the Chain Baseball Academy. For nearly two decades, he had trained thousands of boys in the competitive art of "America's Favorite Pastime." Ben takes youngsters of various walks of life and teaches them the fundamentals of hitting, pitching, and catching. Many go on to become star high school, college, and professional baseball players. It is no surprise that Chain Baseball has produced over 300 college level athletes and 44 professional, including two World Series pitchers!

However it is not just about baseball. It's about character building, teamwork, and excelling on and off the field. Ben's most important lesson for the parents is that if the kid doesn't want to be a baseball player: Don't force him. In today's society, sometimes parents can push their children too much. That takes the fun out of it for them and can hurt their confidence. Instead, parents should let them enjoy being kids. If they want to play baseball, fine, and if they don't, that's fine too. They have to want it for themselves, not their Moms and Dads.

Because of the amount of traveling required, playing baseball can be expensive. Not all families can afford the time and money involved. That's why Ben and Chain owner Buddy Meyer work hard to find financial aid for kids in need. The term "elite athlete" doesn't mean financially elite. They want the door to be open to all.

Ben also works patiently with Moms and Dads. He has a special place for women whose husbands are deployed. Chain Academy is less than a mile from Hunter Army Airfield, home of the 3rd ID. Often, Moms walk through the door with a boy whose dad is in Afghanistan or Iraq. Mom doesn't know much about baseball, but she's come to the right place. Ben makes sure her son, who has often just moved to town, is treated like family.

Finally, Ben leads by example. At 81 years old, he doesn't sit at the desk barking out instructions. He gets in the cage, picks up a bat, and shows his students how to swing, catch, or throw. And when the time allows, he puts on a batter's helmet and takes a few swings himself. With his perfect form he drives the ball hard and strong, proving to all he knows what he's doing.

Ben likes the great athlete but no more than the earnest athlete. No matter what the age, if a kid tries his best, Ben's there to help make him a better player. I can attest to that. I've seen him patiently spend hours coaching a fifty-six-year-old congressman. Even if there's little improvement, year by year, he's ready to help! His enthusiasm is contagious.

Ben's an optimist. He loves his country, his family, his favorite sport of baseball and the kids of all ages who play it. Star athletes come to the Chain all the time but nothing lights up his face as much as a grandchild.

In today's society, we have widespread obesity. In the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, we spend as much time talking about obesity and exercise as hunger. We need more people like Ben who have kept themselves in shape. We need people to stay active physically, mentally, and spiritually. Think of the billions we could save in health care costs if more people took Ben's example. Finally, think how much more fun we'd have as a country if instead of just watching America's favorite pastime we would all play it.

May Ben and the Chain Baseball Academy keep up the good work and continue to inspire the rest of us for many years to come.

IRAN THREAT REDUCTION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. Iran activities are troubling and our Nation must continue to work to build an international coalition to pressure and isolate Iran until it verifiably ends such activities. The policies we use to effect our goals are as important as the rhetoric about being tough on Iran.

I vote for this legislation while noting it has flaws that must be addressed in the other body, in cooperation with the Administration. I will speak to some of those needed changes in a minute. However, I think other provisions such as language targeting government officials who commit human rights abuses and the provisions aimed at stopping Iran's Revolutionary Guard from trying to evade current U.S. and multilateral sanctions make sense. When the U.S. and our international allies work together, our efforts on Iran, including sanctions and diplomacy, are more effective and stronger. The same can be said when the Congress and the Administration are working together.

We should not confuse support for this bill with the fact that there exists a vast divergence of views in this Congress on the best policy to deal with the threat posed by Iran. However, the Republican majority determines the schedule and has made a choice to bring this bill up under a procedure that prevents any Member with other ideas (either to make the bill stronger or weaker depending on your view) from making further changes to it.

Even with my yes vote, I believe this legislation is in need of improvement. Sending a strong message is one thing but enacting an effective policy that supports that message is another. And this bill must be improved so our policy can match the strong message.

Where can this bill be improved? I have long been concerned and I have expressed those concerns on this floor before about unilateral sanctions. Treasury Secretary Geithner said last year, "to be truly effective in ending Iran's proliferation activities and Iran's support for terrorism, we need to have in place a concerted, international approach. This is not something the United States can do alone. We need other countries to move with us." I concur wholeheartedly.

Yet, I know that the Administration has warned some provisions, like mandatory Iranian Central Bank Sanctions, may end up splintering the international coalition that it worked relentlessly to build as exemplified by passage of last year's UN Security Council Sanction Resolution. In a recent letter, Secretary Geithner made clear his concerns that sanctioning the Central Bank of Iran could negatively affect "many of our closest allies and largest trading partners." Again, the most likely to be adversely affected by this bill are our closest allies, the ones we depend on to pressure Iran.

Why would this be so? According to Secretary Geithner, "rather than motivating these countries to join us in increasing pressure on Iran, they are more likely to resent our actions and resist following our lead—a consequence that would serve the Iranians more than it harms them." The Administration has suggested ways to achieve the goals of this bill while ensuring we don't cripple the international coalition and consensus that it has worked so hard to build against Iran. Congress should listen. A piece of legislation that results in fewer countries working with us to isolate Iran and bring a verifiable end to its troubling nuclear activities is not a victory in my book.

Another provision in the bill—added in Committee—would prohibit U.S. diplomatic or other contact, whether intentionally or incidentally, with certain Iranian government officials. Whether intended by its authors or not, concerns have been raised about negative impact on our diplomatic efforts. I urge the Senate to remove this provision. It adds nothing to the bill's effectiveness but brings unnecessary confusion and controversy.

H.R. 1905 would also require the President to report, after its enactment, on negative impacts the bill would cause on our relations with friendly nations and on the U.S. economy. I think this gets it backwards. We need to get a better bill that addresses those concerns up front, rather than wait until after we have shattered the international coalition.

Again, I support a strong and unified international effort against Iran with U.S. leadership but my continued support for this legislation requires those in Senate (who will have the opportunity to amend it unlike the House did) to work with the Administration to address possible negative impacts on our diplomatic efforts, economy, and the Iranian people. This occurred last year to get CISADA passed and I hope we repeat it again this time.

Lastly, no one should take passage of this legislation as a sign that diplomacy is off the table and that the only option going forward is a military strike. We need to invest in diplomacy—maybe now more than ever—and to continue to work with our international allies and others interested in peace and stability in the region.

TRIBUTE TO THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to the United States Armed Forces and Intelligence Services on the occasion of the successful completion of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Nine years ago our country embarked on a military campaign to end the tyrannical rule of Saddam Hussein, bring the Iraqi people freedom and make the world a safer place. The road has not been an easy one to travel but through it all our U.S. service members have persevered. From the insurgency in the al Anbar Province to the violence in Baghdad, to the ultimate success of the surge, our troops did not lose sight of the goal. As the enemy